GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3424
ANSWERED ON:16.04.2008
EFFECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON PILGRIMAGES
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the pilgrimages such as Gangotri, Yamunotri and Badrinath Dhams are facing threat due to climate change and environmental pollution;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to check it?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) & (b) Although Geological Survey of India (GSI) has reported recession in the Gangotri glacier at a rate of 18.80 m/year during 1935-1996 period,there are no specific studies undertaken to establish a correlation between the climate change and environmental pollution and the glacial changes in the region around the pilgrimages of Gangotri,Yamunotri and Badrinath Dhams.

(c) A sustainable development path is being followed through a range of policies and programmes to mitigate climate change and reduce carbon emissions. Some of the steps taken by the Government include interalia-setting up of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency and encouraging energy conservation and introduction of energy efficiency labeling, promoting use of renewable energy, carrying out power sector reforms and active renewable energy programme, use of cleaner and lesser carbon intensive fuel for transport, fuel switching to cleaner energy, afforestation and conservation of forests, promotion of clean coal technologies, reduction of gas flaring, encouraging Mass Rapid Transport systems and environmental quality management for all sectors.

The National Environment Policy 2006 of Ministry of Environment & Forests interalia addresses the issue of global warming. The Government has also set up an "Expert Committee on Impacts of Climate Change" in May 2007 to study the impacts of anthropogenic climate change on India and to identify the measures that may be needed to address vulnerability to anthropogenic climate change impacts.

A high level coordination committee chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister called "Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change to coordinate National action for assessment,adaptation and mitigation of climate change" was constituted on 6th June 2007. In the meeting held on 13th July 2007, the council, interalia decided to prepare and finalise 'India's Climate Change Action Programme'.